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History-Social  
Science Standard  
5.8.4.



# Nature and Newcomers

## **California Education and the Environment Initiative**

Approved by the California State Board of Education, 2010

### **The Education and the Environment Initiative Curriculum is a cooperative endeavor of the following entities:**

California Environmental Protection Agency  
California Natural Resources Agency  
California State Board of Education  
California Department of Education  
Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle)

### **Key Partners:**

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### **Office of Education and the Environment**

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## **Lesson 1    “Ho! For California!”—From Wagon Trails to Highways**

None required for this lesson.

## **Lesson 2    Natural Systems Along the Trails**

None required for this lesson.

## **Lesson 3    Seasons and Reasons**

None required for this lesson.

## **Lesson 4    Life Cycles on the Prairie**

None required for this lesson.

## **Lesson 5    Choosing a Place to Call Home**

None required for this lesson.

## **Lesson 6    East to West: A Different Life**

None required for this lesson.

## **Assessments**

Nature and Newcomers—Traditional Unit Assessment Master . . . . . 2

Westward Bound: The Diary of \_\_\_\_\_

—Alternative Unit Assessment Master. . . . . 6

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Part 1**

**Instructions:** Choose terms from the Word Bank to fill in the sentences below.  
(1 point each)

**Word Bank**

arable	climate	natural regions	fresh water	migration
natural resources	precipitation	terrain	vegetation	water cycle

1. Settlers had to cross through four different \_\_\_\_\_ as they traveled the overland trails to the West.
2. Abundant \_\_\_\_\_ drew settlers to the West.
3. Settlers had to time their trip so that enough \_\_\_\_\_ was available to their oxen and cattle.
4. Because of its importance to preventing dehydration, overland trails and new settlements were often located near \_\_\_\_\_.
5. While farmland in the West was \_\_\_\_\_, much of the soil in the East was overused and no longer healthy.

**Part 2**

**Instructions:** Select the best answer and circle the correct letter. (1 point each)

6. Which of the following could make the trip across the overland trails easier?
  - a. steep terrain
  - b. long stretches of flat land with sagebrush
  - c. tall prairie grasses
  - d. a year with a drought

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Which of the following was not a reason settlers moved west?
  - a. overcrowded conditions in the East
  - b. plenty of land in the East
  - c. the discovery of gold in the West
  - d. clean western air
  
8. Starting an overland trip in spring could mean which of the following?
  - a. growing grasses for oxen and cattle
  - b. settlers could hunt bison for food
  - c. rivers were high and hard to cross
  - d. All of the above.
  
9. Which of the following attracted settlers to the West?
  - a. farmland with rich soils
  - b. a warm climate
  - c. free land that was good for farming
  - d. All of the above.
  
10. Which of the following helped migrants choose a place to start a settlement?
  - a. wanting to avoid winter in the Sierra Nevada
  - b. having relatives and friends in a town
  - c. being located near a river
  - d. All of the above.

### Part 3

**Instructions:** Read and answer the following questions in full sentences in the spaces provided. (4 points each)

11. Overland-trail travelers traveled through four natural regions: temperate forest (deciduous), grassland/prairie, desert, and alpine/mountain. Choose one of these natural regions. Describe one way it helped settlers and one way it made their trip difficult.

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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12. Give two examples of conditions in the East that prompted settlers to head west. Then, give two examples of conditions in the West that drew settlers across the country.

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13. Name one natural cycle that affected settlers on the overland trails. Give two examples of how it affected the settlers.

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14. Overland-trail travelers faced many decisions while traveling to the West. If you were a settler, how would you handle the following situation.

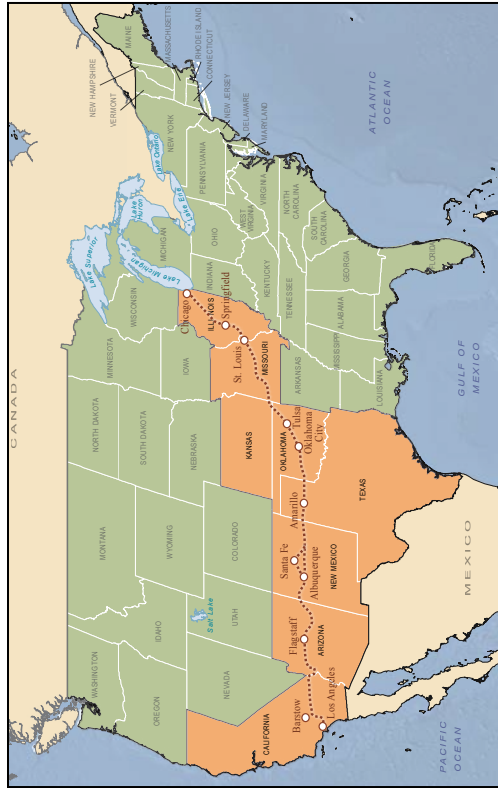
This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



Congratulations! You have traveled for many months. You now arrive in California. Write one last time in your diary. Compare and contrast the West and the East. How is life different in the West from the East? (10 points)

[illegible]

Fold

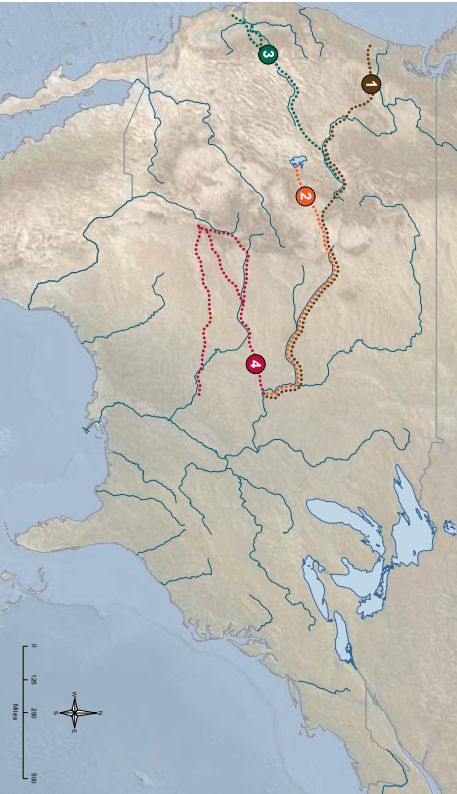


# Westward Bound: The Diary of

Name: \_\_\_\_\_



It is the late 1840s. You are a farmer from Missouri. Your cousin returns from the West and claims it is beautiful. He gives you a map of the four main trails. Label the four trails, numbered on the map below. California, Oregon, Mormon, and Santa Fe. (10 points)



Trail	Name
1	
2	
3	
4	

2 Westward Bound

Fold

You now pass over the Sierra Nevada. Why did your family choose the California Trail? The trail to Oregon is flat. Why is it worth the dangerous journey through the mountains? Make an entry in your diary that explains your choice. (10 points)

Westward Bound 7



This year, your crops do not produce much. You and your family are sure that life will be better in the West. Other families decide to join your wagon train for different reasons. Write a short diary entry explaining why you have decided to head west. Also, give two reasons why the other families have decided to join you. (10 points)

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Westward Bound **3**

Fold



This year, the Great Basin is extremely dry. There are not many grasses to feed your oxen, and water that is safe for drinking is scarce. Because drinking water is scarce, your family must make a choice. Do you leave the trail to find water? Or, do you keep following the trail and risk dehydration? Choose one option and explain your reasons in your diary. Also, explain why your family chose to leave during the springtime. Why didn't you leave in the winter? (10 points)

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**6** Westward Bound



Fold

You and your family pack your wagons and hit the trail headed to the West. As you travel, you leave behind forests and enter the prairie. Explain how the land, plants, and weather on the prairie influenced your journey. While crossing the prairie, you were caught in a bad storm. Explain what happened to you. (10 points)

4 Westward Bound

You and your family arrive at the North Platte River and must cross it. There is a ferry service, but the wait to cross is long, and the ferry is expensive. Waiting for the ferry will add an extra five days to your trip, which is already taking longer than you had planned. Crossing the river alone will take only one day. However, crossing alone is harder, and you might lose your oxen and supplies. Do you wait for the ferry, or cross the river alone? Choose one option and explain your reasons in your diary. Also, explain why the length of the journey is important to you. (10 points)

Westward Bound 5













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